

existing quantifiable proxies, even for the intended variables, but historians will sense them as substituting economists' generalized abstractions for the flows of specific contextualized motivations that they see as accounting for all human actions. Historians thus view development as a process rather than as the static institutions intended here to account somehow for change. The statistical generation of artificial data comes at the expense of their relevance to the actions they are purported to explain. Their remoteness from human reality parallels the illogic of this volume's attempt to project modelings of modernity into African pasts. Neither promises great utility in guiding Africans through the processes of development it is meant to promote.

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**David M. Anderson and Michael Bollig, eds. *Resilience and Collapse in African Savannahs*.** Abingdon: Routledge, 2017. x + 232 pp. \$155.00. Cloth. ISBN: 978-1-138-28877-5.

David M. Anderson and Michael Bollig's edited volume *Resilience and Collapse in African Savannahs* makes more widely accessible an important collection of articles first published in the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*. Although the chapters look at change, adaptation, and resilience in one particular geographic area, the range of disciplinary perspectives involved here and their framing within a cyclical model of challenge and response, encompassing both human communities and natural ecosystems and drawing on a large body of social and natural science research, give the book as a whole a much wider significance. The editors' introduction is especially helpful in bringing the chapters together and providing the reader with a working context.

The study area itself is well-suited to collaborative interdisciplinary inquiry. Baringo is a bounded area of lake flats flanked by steep escarpments south of Lake Turkana in Kenya's northern Rift Valley. It includes different but complementary ecological niches, supporting livestock grazing, both rain-fed and intensive irrigation agriculture, and foraging, and is occupied by several small communities who viewed Baringo as a place of refuge and opportunity. The area has generated a rich and varied body of data ranging from colonial studies of erosion and over-stocking to more recent work on development, agricultural change, inter-communal violence, and local politics.

The adaptive cycle model is set out in the chapter by Bollig, which looks at how the Pokot "became a people" and moved into and now (it appears) out of intensive subsistence pastoralism after a catastrophic and prolonged drought in the early nineteenth century. This regional drought, discussed

by Anderson in the following chapter, erased both communities and their subsistence resources and thus acts as a historical baseline for the present study. The cycle moves through four stages, beginning with recovery (from collapse), moving through stages of exploitation (of new opportunities and resources) and conservation, when the community developed the structures and ideology necessary to maintain and defend its mode of exploitation, and ending with “release” at the point where the system has locked up, can no longer adapt to maintain itself, and begins to collapse, thus “releasing” a new cycle of renewal, innovation, and reconfiguration. Bollig and other contributors argue that that point in the cycle has now been reached.

This chronological scheme works well enough for Baringo, but, as Bollig himself points out, it cannot be transferred and applied mechanically elsewhere. It is to be understood as a complex system of interacting variables operating at different levels or registers. The mix will thus vary from case to case. Moreover, the model is processual rather than predictive, and the flow may not be unidirectional. External interventions, including serious drought or disease and high levels of violence, which, as several of the studies indicate, can have serious nutritional as well as environmental effects, may create “cross-currents” and “back eddies.”

The real heuristic value of this approach perhaps lies in the breadth and flexibility it accords to the concept of resilience as the basis for adaptation and survival and in the long time-scale it offers. Looking at the deep history of irrigation agricultural systems in Marakwet and Pokot, Davies and Moore find continuity and stability over time, based on “cultural resilience,” but also innovation. Following this, Greiner and Mwaka argue that the expansion of commercial honey collection in East Pokot should be understood as an intensification of labor rather than a diversification of production. The last two chapters in the book, by Little and Lynch, extend resilience into the modern political field, through studies of ethnic mobilization to defend resources, in one case (Il Chamus) through entry into the electoral process and in the other (Sangwer) via the use of indigeneity as a vehicle for making land claims. Finally, Straight and her co-authors (chapter 9) move from making claims (to land) to making meaning (from landscape). In the only paper focused outside the area, albeit on Samburu who have historical links with Baringo, they discuss the “moral agency” of landscape itself. The idea of “*ntorror*,” sweet and well-watered pasture, recalls conflict and displacement, but also the memory of presence and survival, even if communities and identities change and are replaced. Place and presence, if largely silent, are an important aspect of the resilience discussed in this volume.

The cycle can also encompass environmental change. Here the studies have benefitted from the newer understandings of grassland ecosystems as dynamic, resilient, and yet unstable. Ironically, older assumptions about stability and succession had a strong influence on colonial environmental interventions in Baringo. Chapter 5 looks at the relationship between pasture dynamics and herding patterns; chapter 6, which examines the impact of invasive plant species, can almost be read as a vegetation version of the

adaptive cycle, from implantation to exploitation/expansion to conservation/consolidation.

One foundational story connected with Baringo has drought survivors looking up and deciding to “climb the escarpment” to safety. Some made it, and “became” the Maasai. Today, it seems, we are standing on the edge of a precipice looking down. Nonetheless, most of the contributors to this volume reject neo-Malthusian gloom, oddly reminiscent of colonial views of development in the region, in current assessments of the future. They remind us of the strength of indigenous resilience and press for conceptual rigor and a critical assessment of data with a good dose of “historical hindsight.” Perhaps the cycle of resilience and recovery will begin again, creating new communities, systems of production, and landscapes.

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**Frederick Cooper. *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State*.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. xii+130 pp. \$35.00 Cloth. ISBN 978-0-674-28139-4. eISBN 978-0-674-36930-6.

In the current neo-nationalist world of Brexit and making America great again, Fred Cooper’s thoroughly historical collection of essays on political (and thus partisan and inherently divisive) identities in an interconnected world is a timely reflection on the promise of contingencies and connections. The three core chapters of this small book originated as MacMillan-Stewart Lectures at Harvard’s W. E. B. Du Bois Institute in 2012; Cooper takes Du Bois’ 1946 book, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part which Africa Has Played in World History*, as his text from which to examine Africa’s places within worlds that have changed over the recent millennium and a half through capitalism, empire, and the nation-state. The latter two are a historical sequence, with the turning point from a world of empires to a world of nation-states coming at the very moment that Du Bois was envisioning a post-conflict future for Africa. Cooper considers the war-wearied world at that moment in time and imagines its openness to new ways of co-existence. His aim is to escape the teleological tendencies to naturalize the nation-state as the inevitable model of political organization in an independent Africa and to contemplate the additional paths then in play but not taken: continental or global pan-Africanism, confederation with European partners, regionalism, socialist globalism, and others.

The brevity of the published lectures format allows Cooper to weave together arguments he has developed, often at length, in the rich corpus of his many, always-thoughtful, publications around a solidly historical core logic of indeterminate possibilities. Faced with this array of possibilities, human actors have contended to nudge the contexts in which they have